

Hansard: Brown to Thibeault -- Hydro-Rate Reduction Plan

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INSTANT HANSARD

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Sneaker, my question is for the Premier. According to the scathing auditor general's report, the Minister -- ministry of energy signed a contract with the retainer of \$500,000 to receive help from a law firm to provide services and to compile emails before providing them to us. At the same time they completed the special report. The ministry has still not provided us with all the emails from the auditor general's office. Those emails were requested on May 31st, 2017. I can appreciate the frustration of the auditor general. Mr. Sneaker, Premier, authorize or instruct the Minister of energy to block or delay the release of those emails, or did the Minister obstruct the auditor general on his own decision?

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. Our government remains committed to being open and transparent and continues to co-operate with the office of the auditor general. For example, Mr. Sneaker, the independent electricity system operator has so far provided 1,200 records to the auditor general. Ontario power generation has provided hundreds of records. Mr. Sneaker, The Ontario financing authority has provided 3,242 records. Treasury board, thousands every records. And as of yesterday, Mr. Sneaker, I explained that, as of October 13th, the ministry has provided 13,212 records to the office of the auditor general. In this process, Mr. Sneaker, and throughout our everyday operations, we're adhering to all document retention standards. Additionally, Mr. Sneaker, the ministry is continuing to release additional information to the auditor general. In fact committed to providing all additional records to the auditor by November 1st. The ministry has been regularly providing the auditor general's office with additional documents each week and will continue.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Sneaker, back to the Premier. The question was who ordered the obstruction? Was it the Premier's office or was it the Minister of energy's own decision? The Minister said that he released 13,000 emails to the auditor general. However he still went out and got some high-priced help for this apparent obstruction. In fact the half a million dollars consulting firm and his office originally identified some 2 million emails. That means he released less than 1%. That's actually .65% of the identified emails. We released 1% of our emails to the auditor general. That's not good enough. Mr. Sneaker, less than 1%. That's not transparent. That's a government that's engaged in obstruction. So, Mr. Sneaker, my question is very straightforward to the Premier herself. Will the Premier release the other 99% of the emails and -- to the auditor general.

>> Minister Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. Again we had 80 custodians identified capturing 40 phrases, Mr. Speaker, that provided over 2 million emails. None of those --

not all of those emails. Mr. Sneaker. applied to this actual document and to this request, Mr. Sneaker. But really, when we're looking at what was being done with the fair hydro plan, Mr. Sneaker, it was giving families what they had asked for, real and immediate relief on their electricity bills, and that's what we delivered, Mr. Sneaker. We made a policy choice to ensure that we continue to have a clean, reliable and affordable -- Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. As I was saying, we made the policy choice to ensure that we continue to have a clean, reliable and affordable electricity system. Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. As I was saying, we made the policy choice to ensure that we continue to have a clean, reliable and affordable electricity system. For ratepayers of today and ratepayers of tomorrow.

>> Patrick Brown: Mr. Sneaker, for a third time, directly to the Premier. The half-a-million-dollar consultants have had since May 31st to get these emails to the auditor general. That's 141 days and counting. I'm sure Peter Faist works his email magic a lot quicker than that and it only costs \$10,000, Mr. Sneaker. I agree with the auditor general. This is an offensive obstruction of the rights of the auditor general, and every single member of this legislature, Mr. Sneaker -- One more day is one too many. So my question, Mr. Sneaker, directly to the Premier -- I hope that she will answer this herself rather than passing the buck. Will she have those emails boxed up and sent over to the auditor general before another one of her Liberal cronies has a chance to double delete them? Exposure. Will she release the other 99% of emails on this very serious matter?

>> Minister Thiébaud: Thank you, Mr. Sneaker. Talking about days, we know it's almost 365 days that they've said that they would release a plan on what they would do with the electricity sector, Mr. Sneaker, and they have done nothing. Let's look at what we have done, Mr. Sneaker. We've lowered electricity bills by 25% for all residential customers and as many as a half a million small businesses and farms, and I know the parties opposite have yet to even present a credible plan. Families in this province asked for real and immediate relief and that's what we've delivered, Mr. Sneaker. The fair hydro plan is providing that 25% reduction to all residential ratepayers and guarantees that we're going to keep the costs will not rise beyond the rate of inflation for the next four years, Mr. Sneaker, electricity rates had risen too much too fast, and as a result of this investments that we've made in our electricity system, which have become unreliable. With Brownouts and blackouts, the fair hydro plan makes sure, with the investments that we made, that we've made made it clean, reliable and affordable, Mr. Sneaker. With Brownouts and blackouts, the fair hydro plan makes sure, with the investments that we made, that we've made made it clean, reliable and affordable, Mr. Speaker.

N.B.: Transcripts are captured by a closed captioning system and may contain errors.